

# ARIZONA METH PROJECT

**NOTE TO EDITORS:** The following is an Op-Ed from Attorney General Terry Goddard and Maricopa County Supervisor Don Stapley. Attorney General Goddard and Supervisor Stapley are co-chairs of the ARIZONA METH Project Advisory Board. If you have any questions, please contact Andrea Esquer at 602-542-8019 or at [andrea.esquer@azag.gov](mailto:andrea.esquer@azag.gov).

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Facial sores and blood-shot eyes -- TV spots depicting the slow physical deterioration of meth users will soon air during programs watched by teens...

A jail cell, a dirty bathroom, an emergency room gurney and a blood-stained sink -- images of the grim reality of meth addiction will appear in newspapers and on billboards across the state...

Arizona is launching a public service campaign this month that graphically depicts the horrors of methamphetamine use. Our state is one of the first in the nation to replicate the nationally recognized Montana Meth Project.

Two years ago in Montana, these ads debuted on television, radio, the Internet and in print and became a topic of conversation for many families. In Montana, these ads kicked off thousands of discussions between parents and their teens about this destructive drug.

Teens previewing the ads at the Graham-Greenlee Meth Conference in Thatcher agreed that students their age would pay attention. The ads are effective because they not only use teens to tell why not to use meth, but they actually show the severe physical effects of meth use and the devastating impact on families and friends.

Methamphetamine abuse is a growing problem in Arizona. According to the 2006 Arizona Youth Survey, 4.3 percent of our state's youth between 13 and 17 have tried meth, twice the national average. According to law enforcement, meth is the number one crime problem in Arizona and across the country, linked to approximately 75 percent of property and violent crime.

Meth is the only illegal drug that can be manufactured from ingredients that can be purchased legally in supermarkets and drugstores. Though meth labs have been reduced since the adoption of pseudoephedrine purchasing restrictions, in Arizona, along with other western states, meth continues to be readily available smuggled into this country from superlabs in Mexico.

The drop in meth use and related crime in Montana make it clear that the Meth Project is working.

Montana Attorney General Mike McGrath credited the Meth Project with helping change attitudes about the drug. A survey released in January showed 93 percent of students in the state considered meth a "great risk." Meth-related crime fell 53 percent in 2006, compared with the previous year. The overall rate of employees in Montana who tested positive for meth fell more than 70 percent from 2005 to 2006.

The Montana Meth Project was founded and funded by Thomas Siebel, who donated \$5.6 million to start the program. Montana is now taking steps to support future phases of the program through a public-private partnership. Unlike other anti-drug programs, the ARIZONA METH PROJECT focuses solely on the anti-meth message - no politicians will be featured in any ARIZONA METH PROJECT ads.

Solving Arizona's methamphetamine problem will require a strong commitment to a comprehensive approach that includes enforcement, prevention, education and treatment. The ARIZONA METH PROJECT has raised \$5.3 million for this fight. The money comes from the contributions of 10 Arizona counties and the Attorney General's Office. A portion of the \$8 million legislative appropriation for meth interdiction, treatment and prevention also helps support this project. Participating counties include Cochise, Gila, Graham, Greenlee, La Paz, Maricopa, Mohave, Navajo, Pinal and Yuma.

ARIZONA METH PROJECT thanks the Legislature for responding to the meth crisis in such a significant way and to the many individuals and organizations across Arizona for their continuing commitment to reducing meth use in Arizona. For more information or to see the ads, visit [www.arizonamethproject.org](http://www.arizonamethproject.org) or call 602-372-METH (6384) Outside Maricopa County call toll-free 1-866-773-8999.

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